the Central Voice

REAL GAY NEWS. WE GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT.

Local leaders reflect on changes due to COVID-19

PAGE 11

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PRIDE IS A STATE OF MIND

2020 Pride fests in the region roll with the punches

By Frank Pizzoli

To say that COVID-19 has cramped our Pride style is not an exaggeration. When it comes to events in the central Pennsylvania, all the well-honed playbooks are out. In with contingency planning against a sea of challenging unknowns.

Please Google links provided below as the rescheduled events are closer to the anticipated dates. Planning is still underway by the volunteer organizations around the region.

Pride Festival of Central PA

Originally slated for July 24, the 29th Annual Pride Festival of Central PA has been cancelled. The event would have taken place in Soldier's Grove Memorial Park on the grounds of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex in Harrisburg.

"Well, it's the last thing we wanted to do," Brad Martin told *The Central Voice* in a phone call. Martin is the venue's volunteer President. The board's official

Please see **PRIDE,** page **17**

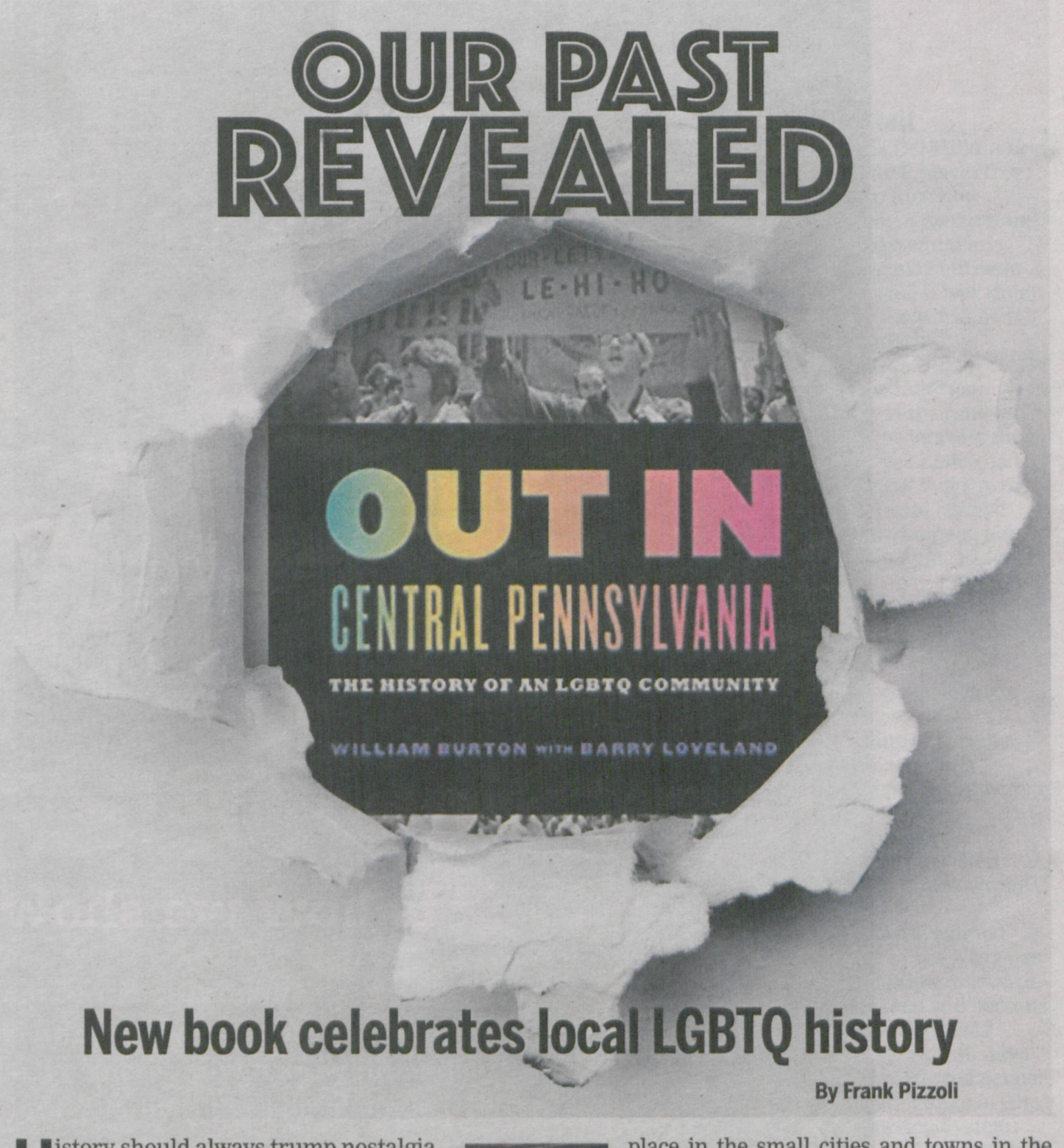
LBGTQ+ VOICES HEARD

The Central Voice garners media awards

The Central Voice received five awards as part of the 2020 Professional Keystone Media Award program sponsored by Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association. Central PA's only LGBTQ bimonthly and web site publication garnered one first place and four second place awards in Division VII - Niche Publications, all circulations.

The Keystone Media Awards reinforce excellence by individuals in the news media profession, by recognizing journalism that consistently provides relevance,

Please see **MEDIA AWARDS,** page **14**



New book celebrates local LGBTQ history

By Frank Pizzoli

History should always trump nostalgia because "nostalgia isn't what it used to be" as Yogi Berra said. The notion applies to our own queer history.

Each of us should be nostalgic for our own past because it's our past, not because it's more illuminating than the experiences of another era. *Out in Central Pennsylvania* allows readers to learn about local people who shaped our collective history.

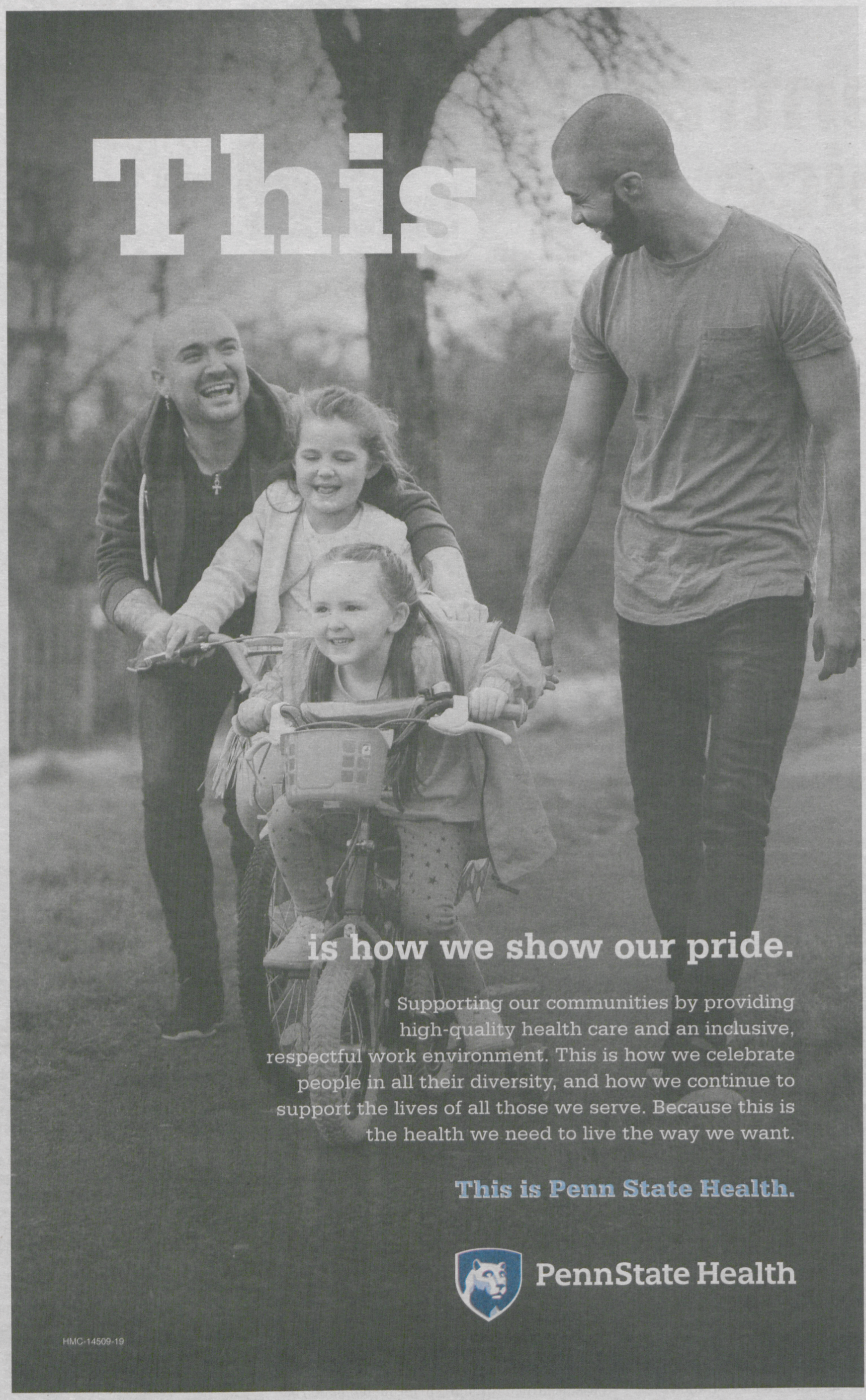
Outside of major metropolitan areas, the fight for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights has had its own unique and rich history—one that is quite different from the national narrative set in New York and California. Out highlights one facet of this lesser-known but equally important story, immersing readers in the queer community building and social networking that has taken place in the small cities and towns in the heart of Pennsylvania from the 1960s to the present day.

Authors William Burton and Barry Loveland

Drawing from oral histories and the archives of the LGBT Center of Central PA History Project, this book recounts the innovative ways that LGBT central Pennsylvanians organized to demand civil rights and to improve their quality of life in a region that often rejected them.

Author William Burton, with able assistance from Barry Loveland, co-founder and chair of the LGBT Center of Central PA History Project, give us 272 pages of compelling stories of individuals seeking community and grappling with inequity, harassment, and discrimination, and featuring a distinctive trove of historical photographs, Out is a local story with national implications.

Please see **PAST REVEALED,** page **23**


This
is how we show our pride.
Supporting our communities by providing high-quality health care and an inclusive, respectful work environment. This is how we celebrate people in all their diversity, and how we continue to support the lives of all those we serve. Because this is the health we need to live the way we want.
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Political Updates | WORLD & NATIONAL VOICES

INTERNATIONAL

MEXICO

117+ queers murdered last year

At least 117 LGBTQ people were murdered in Mexico in the past year reports Matt Moore for the Gay Times. The figures were released by the LGBTQ advocacy group, Letra S. They also showed that this was an increase in LGBTQ murders, nearly a third (27%) up from 2018 and the highest figure since 2015. The numbers come from official news reports about murders, but the group said that the number could be higher. The group revealed that more than half of the victims were trans women, while a third of them were gay men. Overall, there have been at least over 441 murders of LGBTQ people over the past five years. And so far this year, there have been at least 26 LGBTQ murders, with 20 of the victims being trans women.

TURKEY

Kids, stop drawing rainbows!

Schools in Turkey have reportedly been told to stop children from drawing rainbows *(Twitter/@SPoDLGBTI)* Turkey has seen a sharp spike in homophobia following a televised anti-LGBT+ sermon by the head of religious affairs when he commenced Ramadan. Then, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made comments about homosexuality "corrupting generations"which some think encouraged a wave of hate speech blaming LGBT people for poisoning the youth. It has now culminated in education officials ordering schools to prevent children from drawing rainbows, which are supposedly a symbol of LGBT+ "perversion". The rainbows were being displayed in windows as a symbol of hope for those in isolation, following a trend seen in many countries affected by coronavirus. The art museum Istanbul Modern encouraged children across Turkey to take part and displayed the paintings and drawings on their website.

US Spy agencies to reject criminalization?

The Trump administration is considering cutting back on sharing intelligence with partner countries that criminalize homosexuality as part of a push by the acting director of national intelligence, Richard Grenell, to prod those nations to change their laws. The intelligence community should be pushing American values with the countries it works with, Mr. Grenell said in an interview this week. Grenell is thought to be the first openly gay cabinet member and has put anti-discrimination issues near the top of his agenda. In his earlier post as the American ambassador to Germany, Grenell began last year assembling gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender groups from the United States and other countries as part of the administration's effort to change anti-gay laws. While tying human rights reforms to national security is often the hallmark of Democratic administrations, mixing hard-power priorities with trade and other issues has been part of President Trump's foreign policy. Stuart Milk, head of the Harvey Milk Foundation and nephew of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official in a major American city, said Grenell reached out to work with his organization on decriminalization. Milk said he was cleareyed about the Trump administration's poor record on LGBT rights, particularly given its efforts to roll back anti-discrimination efforts for transgender troops in the military.

BRAZIL

Brazilian Pres. thinks WHO making kids gay

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro accused the World Health Organization (WHO) of trying to turn children gay in a series of bizarre claims on Facebook reports Bil Browning. He later deleted the post. Like the Brazilian president's claims about COVID-19, the statements weren't true, Browning writes. Bolsonaro, dubbed the "Trump of the Tropics," has followed President Donald Trump's lead and repeatedly criticized the WHO while downplaying the severity of the global coronavirus pandemic. "This is the World Health Organization whose advice on coronavirus some people want me to follow," he wrote. "Should we follow their education policy guidelines, too? For children zero to four years old: satisfaction and pleasure when touching their bodies, masturbation…. For children four to six years old: a positive gender identity… masturbation in early childhood, same-sex relations…. Nine to 12 years old: first sexual experience." The claim was also made by one of Bolsonaro's top advisors on Twitter and repeated or shared by followers. Bolsonaro appears to be referencing an education guide published by Germany's Federal Center for Health Education and the WHO's European office. The document acknowledges that children are discovering their bodies and will have questions about sexuality and how their body works. Last year, Bolsonaro decried gay male tourism to his country, saying that he would prefer men who visit Brazil to have sex with women. "If you want to come here and have sex with a woman, go for your life," Bolsonaro said at a breakfast with journalists. "But we can't let this place become known as a gay tourism paradise. Brazil can't be a country of the gay world, of gay tourism."

TUNISIA

Sorry, your marriage was an error

Tunisian Minister of Local Affairs Lofti Zitoun said that a same-sex marriage that was noted on a Tunisian man's birth certificate was a mistake, saying that the marriage would not be recognized in the country. The LGBTQ organization Shams announced on Facebook that a French man and a Tunisian man who married in France had their marriage noted on the Tunisian man's birth certificate, as is the custom for heterosexual marriages in the country. But then Zitoun said in parliament that the marriage has not been recognized in the country. Homosexuality is illegal in Tunisia and punishable with up to three years in prison. Discrimination against LGBTQ people remains perfectly legal there and, of course, the country does not grant same-sex couples marriage licenses. In an email to *LGBTQ Nation*, the Tunisian LGBTQ organization Mawjoudin said, "This news is false as the reality of what happened is nothing more but an administrative mistake. Mawjoudin denounces the sharing of such news and consequently contributing to the manipulation of public opinion at such sensitive times. This has led to a wave of queerphobic speech, attacks, and bullying on the queer community which put many of them in compromised and dangerous positions while they are in confinement." The minister said that the marriage isn't even legal under French law, which is unlikely. France has recognized marriage equality since 2013, but France's treaty with Tunisia requires that marriages performed in France be legal in Tunisia as well. | PHOTO: HABIB M'HENNI/VIA WIKIPEDIA

NATIONAL

PUERTO RICO

Former PSU volleyball player out

Dennis Del Valle, a pro volleyball player from Puerto Rico now playing in Switzerland and who while in college play for Penn State, said it was time to tell the world he is gay reports Jim Buzinski. Buzinski. He has come out publicly as gay to show that "gay athletes can play at elite levels. Now is the time to speak," Del Valle said. "There must be lots of young athletes who live in secret. On my level, I have had a successful career being gay. I hope they will say to themselves: 'Why not me?' Maybe I could change someone's life. My speech could allow some to gain confidence, to feel safer, not to stop [playing a] sport for fear of rejection."

Navy gives waiver to trans officer

President Trump previously blocked trans people from enlisting or serving after surprising military leaders with a random tweet announcing his arbitrary decision reports Bil Browning. Meanwhile, the Navy has given a waiver to a transgender officer who sued after being banned from serving. "The acting Secretary of the Navy has approved a specific request for exemption related to military service by transgender persons and persons with gender dysphoria," Navy spokeswoman Lt. Brittany Stephens told CNN. "This service member requested a waiver to serve in their preferred gender, to include obtaining a gender marker change in (the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System) and being allowed to adhere to standards associated with their preferred gender, such as uniforms and grooming." The unnamed officer came out after the ban went into effect in June 2019. They were represented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD). "The ban has been in place for over a year and this is the first waiver to be granted," said Jennifer Levi, GLAD Transgender Rights Project Director. "While we are relieved that our client, a highly qualified Naval officer, will be able to continue her service, there are other equally qualified transgender service members who have sought waivers and are still in limbo, despite being perfectly fit to serve. Dedicated military service members shouldn't have to bring a lawsuit to be able to continue doing their job."

Support business that supports you

Publisher's Voice

By Frank Pizzoli

The political yarn: "Dance with the one that brung ya" was a favorite of both journalist Molly Ivans and President Ronald Reagan. So there must be something to the saying if two creatures as different as they latched onto it.

Their point was simple: in politics, as in life, you support those who support you. You are loyal to those who have made you. And that's not just in good times, or when it suits you.

COVID-19 underscores the sentiment behind the words. Now that we can begin moving around the community once again, we all need to support those who support us.

The Central Voice has always enjoyed the broad support of the region's business community. The fact that we attract national advertisers reflects our reputation outside the region.

Fact: Most advertisers in *The Central Voice* are not LGBT-owned businesses. They are LGBT-friendly and inclusive. And that inclusive intersection we all meet. Our mission is business-to-business – our business offering their business access and exposure to a loyal market. And since Day 1, we've also been committed to providing free editorial space to the region's non-profit LGBT organizations and, in one way or another, have been part of every major LGBT fundraising effort in the region since our beginning in 2003.

Recently the PA News Media Association recognized our writers Louie Marven and Tesla Taliaferro, who garnered a First Place Diversity Award for their coverage. Our regular coverage of the York Region gained a News Beat Reporting Award. The work of our Education Columnist Trum Simmons, as well as our Lifestyle & Entertainment Beat and Brad Gebhart's cartooning were also recognized.

So, we've got a good thing going on here. The best way to keep it all going is to support the businesses who support you by spending their advertising dollars in our pages and our web site.

And consider adding your Voice to our effort. *frankpizzoli@gmail.com*

the **Central Voice**

REAL GAY NEWS. WE GIVE IT TO YOU STRAIGHT.

PUBLISHER & EDITOR
Frank Pizzoli
FrankPizzoli@gmail.com

ART DIRECTOR
Louise Sukle

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Julianna Sukle

CARTOONIST
Brad Gebhart

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Yvonne Carmichael
Louie Marven
Trum Simmons
Terry Drew Karanen
Nicolas Duncan
Tesla Taliaferro
Atticus Ranck
Sharon R. Lopez
Amanda Arbour

SALES MANAGER
Dave Brown 717-919-7724 (cell)
717-944-4628 (office)
DaveBrown@PressAndJournal.com

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Community Voices

DO FUNDERS SHAPE US?

COVID-19 highlights problems with LGBTQ fundraising

By Dr. Chris Pepin-Neff
Special to Central Voice

The health emergency brought on by COVID-19 is presenting a financial emergency for national and international LGBTQ fundraising operations. Four immediate areas of concern are clear: Pride, LGBTQ galas, dance parties, and bars.

The model for LGBTQ fundraising is based on corporate sponsorships and social status. Corporate sponsorship fund many of our events creating a reliance on a neoliberal market model for support. When corporations are doing well and their stocks are going up, LGBTQ causes receive funds. But if there are rocky times, then sponsorships are likely to dry up.

In addition, the price tag for access to these events confers social status to certain individuals and groups. Major donor packages, VIP packages and high prices restrict who has access to dinners, galas, and awards events. This creates a dichotomy between those LGBTQ people with money and those with less. Both of these issues present a foundational problem with the structure of fundraising in the LGBTQ community. First is the 30-year model of elites funding the gay mainstream movement. And the second is the way corporations fund the gay mainstream movement.

To be clear, my argument is not that private business cannot do good work or help LGBTQ causes. My point is that we need to be aware of how these funds shape the community.

Pride

Nearly, 100 Pride events have now been cancelled. Kristine Garina, President of the European Pride Organisers Association, stated: "Today brings the devastating news that the number of Prides cancelling or postponing because of COVID-19 will pass 100, and it's very clear that this pandemic is going to have a huge impact on our movement." The map below shows the extent of the cancellations which are the result of COVID-19 concerns and social distancing requirements and the financial distress of the market.

LGBTQ Galas

In the past few weeks, both GLAAD and HRC have noted that they have had to cancel events due to COVID-19 concerns. This is a problem of neoliberal models. Grassroots movements have diversified models of fundraising that allow them to absorb times that are financially distressed. However, this means sacrificing elite models that rely on feelings of high status for major donors.

"This is a $2 million implication to our bottom line," GLAAD's president and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis tells *Variety*. "They are our biggest fundraising events and they help support a lot of our programming."

According to Variety's story on the GLAAD events, "Taylor Swift was to be honored in Los Angeles along with Janet Mock. In New York, the honorees included Ryan Murphy and Judith Light. More than 1,000 guests were expected in Los Angeles and another 800 in New York."

In addition, HRC stated, "we have decided to cancel or postpone all of our public events through the weekend of April 4, including our large-scale fundraising dinners in Nashville on March 14, Los Angeles on March 28 and Houston on April 4."

Dance parties

Dance parties are a steady source of income for LGBTQ community organizations. However, the Task Force's Winter Party Festival came under scrutiny for taking place as the COVID-19 concerns arose. The *Miami Herald* stated, "Nine people who attended Winter Party Festival, an annual event that draws thousands of gay men to Miami Beach, have reported testing positive for COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the new coronavirus, according to the LGBTQ Task Force, which organized the festival."

However, the Task Force is not alone. This is similar to Mardi Gras celebrations in New Orleans. NBC reports, "Health experts say it's no surprise that New Orleans is the center of the coronavirus crisis in hard-hit Louisiana after over a million people flocked to the city to celebrate Carnival for more than a month, culminating in Mardi Gras at the end of February."

In addition, to defend the Task Force, Florida officials have stated, "Regarding WPF, we made the most informed decision at the time, following official guidance available at the time," Carey said in a statement Monday. "Information and circumstances have changed rapidly since WPF."

Bars

Lastly, there is the issue of bars. There is a difference between small businesses and non-profit organizations. Small businesses have weathered the Great Recession, Grindr, and now COVID-19. To get a snap shot of the damage done to retail establishments DC's weekly magazine wrote, "Movie theaters, gyms, spas, massage parlors — all have been directed to shut down. Restaurants and taverns can only serve takeout and delivery. Nightclubs are shuttered. It was all part of a progressive series of orders from Mayor Muriel Bowser, that started March 13. Washington, D.C. is, effectively, in hibernation."

Ultimately, whether the few bars, many Prides, and national organizations survive is a question of grassroots support. Hopefully, the LGBTQ community recognizes that it is through grassroots action rather than neoliberal corporate reliance or major donor elitism that we can move forward together through this crisis. But this will challenge the existing gay mainstream movement. Allowing everyone in the tent includes poor queers with an eye toward centering the marginalized as well as those who have benefited from a system of class exclusion. The future will tell us which model succeeds.

Dr. Chris Pepin-Neff is Senior Lecturer in Public Policy at Sydney University

Voice Box

Notes from our readers

E-mail your comments to frankpizzoli@gmail.com

AWARDS

Facebook comments from readers on Keystone Media awards recently received by writers and columnists for The Central Voice from The PA NewsMedia Association (Story p. 1)

So proud of my hubby, Trum Simmons. His Ally in the Academy column in The Central Voice won a 2020 Keystone Media Award! Thanks, and congrats to Frank Pizzoli for your great leadership and fine editorial eye!

- Michelle Simmons

Congratulations! **- Kim Banister**

Congratulations Frank Pizzoli for all your great journalism over the years! Well deserved! **- Bill Krenz**

Congratulations! Well deserved! **- Derek Cordier**

GRATEFUL

This is really great. Thank you for including this story in your publication. I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute. *(Cultivating sense of belonging for LBGTQ patients, May-June 2020 and at www.thecentralvoice.com)*

- Thomas Z. Pineo, DO, Hospitalist, UPMC Pinnacle

Thank you! **- Tina L. Nixon, MHA, CDE, Vice President Mission Effectiveness, Diversity & Inclusion, UPMC Pinnacle**

SWEETEST RESPONSE

Hershey Co. dismisses anti-LGBT shareholder complaint

During a May virtual annual shareholder meeting of the Hershey Company, the local food products conglomerate best known for its chocolate, an anti-LGBTQ activist asked CEO Michele Buck if she would stop the company's funding of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest US LGBT organization. The CEO dismissed the request, saying the company valued diversity more than anti-LGBTQ bigotry reports Dan Villarreal for LGBTQ Nation.

Justin Danhof, the anti-LGBTQ general counsel of the so-called National Center for Public Policy Research and director of the Free Enterprise Project, said to Hershey's CEO Michele Buck, "The HRC is perhaps the nation's leading opponent of religious liberty. HRC threatens and organizes boycotts when states seek to enact laws protecting the right of people to act according to their faith or to use a bathroom in privacy that matches their DNA."

> To be "Inclusion and diversity are incredibly important values to us here at the Hershey Company... not only to our culture but also to our business."
>
> **- Michele Buck, Hershey Company CEO**

clear, Danhof is speaking about "religious freedom" laws giving Christians a legal pass for discriminating against queer people under the guise of "sincerely held religious beliefs," a position supported by the Trump administration that could allow people to turn LGBT citizens away from businesses, schools, and life-saving services.

His mention of bathrooms is a reference to transphobic bathroom bills that endanger trans people's safety by allowing others to police their gender and characterizing the trans community as pedophilic sexual predators worthy of death.

"At a time when our nation needs to pull together as one to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and reopen the economy, will you reconsider your funding of this bigoted, anti-religious organization that works to tear Americans apart?" Danhof asked.

Buck's response was swift and decisively opposed to his hateful assertions. Buck said, "Inclusion and diversity are incredibly important values to us here at the Hershey Company... not only to our culture but also to our business."

She mentioned that Hershey has recently recognized by Diversity Inc. as being a leader in many areas of diversity including in the LGBT space.

"I'm really proud of our track record in supporting the LBGT community and our employees and customers who identify with the LBGT community," Buck continued. "We continue to be very focused on making all the best decisions we believe possible to foster inclusion and diversity across the company."

In short, Hershey won't be dropping its support of the HRC anytime soon under her leadership.

Experiencing a serious case of bitter grapes, Danhof called HRC "perhaps the most influential left-wing organization that most Americans have never heard of," claiming "HRC staff spend their days trying to end religious freedom and marginalize all Americans of faith."

"Hershey is 100 percent complicit in these vile, bigoted, and reprehensible actions. If the company had any shame, it would end its funding of this extremist organization now."

No one at the company bothered to respond to the rant.

Nonreligious people face stigma and discrimination

By Alejandra Molina

For more than 35 years, Jayrod Garrett's life was immersed in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

He fondly remembers going on a missionary trip to Hawaii, participating in a scouts program and making lifelong friends. He also recalls how hurt he felt when a church leader didn't believe him when a group of kids called him the N-word or how tough it was grappling with the church's stance against gay marriage.

In 2016, after years of feeling conflicted, Garrett left the church.

Now, he identifies as an atheist.

He has adopted a new set of ideals, acknowledging that "meaning comes from making a difference" and that "people are more important than beliefs."

But life as an atheist isn't any less complicated.

Leaving the church affected his relationship with his brother, who remains in the LDS faith and whose wedding he couldn't attend because he was no longer in the church. Living in Utah, he has seen how much easier it can be for Mormons to get hired for certain jobs. It's also sometimes difficult to talk about his beliefs, which are often misunderstood.

"I think of the life I lived before and how I tried to navigate things, and even now I long for that simplicity, because it was very simple to live that way," he said. "It is much more complex and challenging to live without someone telling you what your beliefs need to be."

Garrett is not alone.

A new study, dubbed "Reality Check: Being Nonreligious in America," has found that nonreligious people face discrimination and stigma, conceal their nonreligious identities, and largely see themselves as atheists and humanists.

The report, produced by the nonprofit American Atheists — a national civil rights organization that seeks to achieve religious equality for all Americans — is the culmination of a survey of nearly 34,000 nonreligious people living in the United States.

More than three-quarters of participants identify "very much" with the terms nonreligious (79.6%), atheist (79.4%) and secular (75.1%). Others strongly identify with the terms freethinker (64.9%), humanist (64.6%) and skeptic (61.4%).

More than half (57.1%) say their primary non-religious identity is atheist.

Few (6.9%) say their primary non-religious identity is agnostic.

Most were raised Christian: either in Protestant (54.7%) or Catholic (29.9%) households. One in seven (14.3%) grew up in nonreligious households.

> ...nonreligious people care about maintaining secular public schools, are against religious exemptions that allow for discrimination, and believe in access to abortion and contraception, among other things.

The survey finds that nonreligious people care about maintaining secular public schools, are against religious exemptions that allow for discrimination, and believe in access to abortion and contraception, among other things.

Alison Gill, the American Atheists' vice president for legal and policy, says the report gives nuance to the identities of those who are nonreligious.

"This is a community that is often invisible. People don't often talk about their beliefs even in nonreligious communities," said Gill, one of the report's authors.

Within the first eight hours of the survey going live, more than 10,000 people filled it out, Gill said. They initially hoped to at least get a total of 5,000 participants. Many also took the time to write in responses detailing instances of discrimination they've faced.

"It just goes to show how much this was needed and how much people feel like they really need to get these stories out," she said.

The report shows that participants often report negative experiences, due to their nonreligious identities, in social media (58.3%) and within their families (54.5%).

Survey participants also report issues at school and work.

"Nearly one-third (29.4%) of survey participants who attend school or who have children attending school reported having had negative experiences in an educational setting because of their nonreligious identity," according to the report. "More than one in five (21.7%) employed or recently employed survey participants reported negative experiences in employment because of their nonreligious identity."

The survey asked participants to rate how religious their local community is. Just under half (44.1%) of survey participants say they are from "somewhat religious" communities, while about a third (29.8%) are in "very religious" communities. Those in more religious communities report feeling more out of place.

"The experiences of nonreligious people vary dramatically in different parts of the United States," according to the report. "While nonreligious beliefs may be casually accepted in states like California and Vermont, nonreligious people living in states like Mississippi and Utah have markedly different experiences."

David Mercer, top, a former minister, talks about rethinking the way people relate to and interact with believers while speaking in Polk County in central Florida.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ATHEIST COMMUNITY OF POLK COUNTY

The LGBTQ community, African Americans, Latinos and ex-Muslims report experiencing added layers of discrimination and stigma due to their race or their religious upbringing, according to the report.

A large number of Latinos (61.6%), for example, say they've had negative experiences for being nonreligious within their families. That's compared to the 54.2% of non-Latino participants who reported the same.

The report also finds that while almost one-third (31.4%) mostly or always concealed their nonreligious identity from their immediate family, the rate went up to 42.7% when it involved extended family. Nearly half hid their nonreligious identity among people at work (44.3%) and people at school (42.8%).

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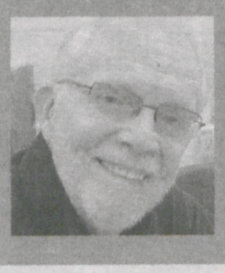
Truth, journalism and the upcoming election

Ally in the Academy



By Trum Simmons

"Just tell the truth," filmmaker Spike Lee said in a recent interview, "and it will be captivating." He was talking about his new movie *Da 5 Bloods* and as you know, Spike Lee has been telling the truth for a long time.

Mark Twain begins *Huckleberry Finn* (1885) with Huck saying, "You don't know about me without you have read 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.' That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There were things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth."

In *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973) Rita Mae Brown tells Molly Bolt's story so that we will know the truth about coming of age as a lesbian in a repressive, extremely hurtful culture.

Molly's college dean tells her that she is simply going through a phase. As Molly explains to a friend why she is attracted to women and not men, the friend responds, "You wouldn't promote such lesbian propaganda if you were sure of yourself and your sexual identity."

Propaganda—what an interesting word. It gets thrown around a lot and many people think of propaganda as lies. It comes from the word "propagate," which originally meant to multiply or breed and, as used in politics and culture, means to spread information. In the 1700s The Roman Catholic Church's Sacred Congregation of Propaganda was a committee of cardinals who were tasked with propagating, spreading the faith.

Propaganda was what the Soviet Union's KGB used during the Cold War to "educate" and convince the populace that they were giving them the truth. In promulgating the party line, they spread all kinds of falsehoods, especially when the news in the country was very bad.

As we approach the coming presidential election there is a lot of propaganda going around. How much of it is true? How does one distinguish truth from lies during a political campaign? How do journalists cover the candidates, and how do we know what journalism to believe?

For years I led sessions at The College Media Association conventions in New York City and elsewhere around the country. One of my favorites was *The Myth of Objectivity*, in which I got students and advisors thinking about just what being objective means.

At HACC my Journalism 101 course textbook defined it this way: "When journalists talk about objectivity they mean that the news story is free of the reporter's opinions or feelings, that it contains facts and that they can be checked against some kind of record."

A 1947 academic report said journalists are most useful when they give "a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning. It is no longer enough to report the fact truthfully. It is now necessary to report the truth about the fact."

Whew! Well, what are the facts? What is a fact, anyway? Dictionaries say facts are things that are real, or true. One definition says a fact is "that which is in accord with reality." And just what is reality?

"I see the world the way it is," former President George W. Bush liked to say. All presidents say stuff like that, and it tells us a lot about them. Think about how President Trump sees the world, which he talks about incessantly. I would hate to live in his world; would you? I have a sense that his world is not very kind to LGBTQ people. Agree?

Of course, when anyone says, "this is what the world is like" they are really saying "this is how I see the world." It's that little word "is" that's the problem. We all have a worldview, the perspective from which we see things, so subjectivity is always at play, at least as I see it.

I've been talking about journalism because that's where we are going to get the best information by which to know what's going on in this campaign season. With so much misinformation and disinformation (deliberate misinformation) floating around these days—especially but not exclusively on social media—good journalism is the place to go.

Good journalism includes opinion pieces and news analyses. Good journalism—which is not the same as public relations, marketing, propaganda and truly fake news. (Truly fake news: I like it!) Good journalism, which can call out BS when necessary.

Remember a previous column in which I explained the difference between lies and BS? Bullshit may contain both lies and truth. Truth doesn't matter to the bullshitter; their goal is to convince you to buy what they're selling. That remind you of our current president?

Good journalism includes context and nuance. This is what that academic report cited earlier meant in saying it is necessary to report the truth about the fact. Responding to and trying to educate readers about just what is going on behind the headlines requires comprehensive, careful, thoughtful, writing. And we must expect the same from the reader, who must read carefully and thoughtfully.

You're reading this column in a publication that works hard to give you the truth. *The Central Voice* digs deep into issues and events that affect the LGBTQ communities in our region. No propaganda here, just good journalism.

10 things bisexuals should discuss with their doctor

Following are the health issues the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association has identified as most commonly of concern for bisexuals. While not all of these items apply to everyone, it's wise to be aware of these issues.

1. Come Out to your Healthcare Provider

In order to provide you with the best care possible, your clinician should know you are bisexual. It should prompt him/her to ask specific questions about you and offer appropriate testing. Be honest and you will get better care. If your provider does not seem comfortable with your sexual orientation, find another provider.

2. HIV/AIDS, Safe Sex

Many men who have sex with men are at an increased risk of HIV infection, but the effectiveness of safe sex in reducing the rate of HIV infection is one of the LGBT community's great success stories. If you are HIV positive, you need to be in care with a good HIV provider. Safe sex is proven to reduce the risk of receiving or transmitting HIV. You should also discuss and be aware of what to do in the event that you are exposed to HIV (Post-Exposure-Prophylaxis)—contacting your provider IMMEDIATELY following an exposure to explore your options. If you are in a relationship where one of you is positive, you should discuss options for prevention with your provider as well. Although women who have sex with women have lower rates of HIV, if you have sex with a gay or bi man (who have increased rates) it is important to understand their HIV status and how to protect yourself.

3. Hepatitis Immunization and Screening

If you have sex with multiple partners (of any gender) you are at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infection with the viruses that cause the serious condition of the liver known as hepatitis. These infections can be potentially fatal, and can lead to very serious long-term issues such as liver failure and liver cancer. Immunizations are available to prevent two of the three most serious viruses. Universal immunization for Hepatitis A Virus and Hepatitis B Virus is recommended for all sexually active people. Safe sex is effective at reducing the risk of viral hepatitis, and is currently the only means of prevention for the very serious Hepatitis C Virus. If you have Hepatitis C there are new, more effective treatments for that infection.

4. Fitness (Diet and Exercise)

Problems with body image are more common among bisexuals and bisexuals are much more likely to experience an eating disorder such as bulimia or anorexia nervosa. While regular exercise is very good for your health too much of a good thing can be harmful. The use of substances such as anabolic steroids and certain supplements can be dangerous. Being overweight or obesity are problems that also affect many bisexuals.

5. Substance Use/Alcohol

Bisexuals may use substances at a higher rate than the general population. These include a number of substances ranging from amyl nitrate ("poppers"), to marijuana, Ecstasy, and amphetamines. If your drug use is interfering with work, school or relationships, your healthcare provider can connect you to help.

6. Depression/Anxiety

Depression and anxiety appear to affect bisexuals at a higher rate than in the general population. The likelihood of depression or anxiety may be greater, and the problem may be more severe for those men who remain in the closet or who do not have adequate social supports. Adolescents and young adults may be at particularly high risk of suicide because of these concerns.

7. STDs

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) occur in sexually active bisexuals at a high rate. These include STD infections for which effective treatment is available (syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, pubic lice, and others), and for which no cure is available (HIV, Hepatitis, Human Papilloma Virus, herpes, etc). There is absolutely no doubt that safe sex reduces the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and prevention of these infections through safe sex is key. The more partners you have in a year, the more often you should be screened. You can have an STD without symptoms, but are still able to give that to others.

8. Prostate, Testicular, Breast, Cervical and Colon Cancer

Screening for these cancers occurs at different times across the life cycle, and access to screening services may be harder for bisexuals because of not getting culturally sensitive care. All bisexuals should undergo these screenings routinely as recommended for the general population.

9. Tobacco

Recent studies seem to support the notion that bisexuals use tobacco at much higher rates than heterosexuals, reaching nearly 50 percent in several studies. Tobacco-related health problems include lung disease and lung cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, and a whole host of other serious problems.

10. HPV (virus that causes warts and can lead to anal & cervical cancer)

Of all the sexually transmitted infections bisexuals are at risk for, human papilloma virus (HPV) — which cause anal and genital warts — is often thought to be little more than an unsightly inconvenience. However, these infections may play a role in the increased rates of anal cancers in bisexual men. Some health professionals now recommend routine screening with anal Pap Smears, similar to the test done for women to detect early cancers. Safe sex should be emphasized. Treatments for HPV do exist, but recurrences of the warts are very common, and the rate at which the infection can be spread between partners is very high. Individuals with a cervix should get routine pap smears as instructed by their clinician.

Author: Robert J Winn, MD AAHIVMS. Medical Director, Mazzoni Center. Philadelphia, PA.

QUEER FRIENDLY

York facility launches COVID-19 program for underserved

By Tesla Taliaferro
Central Voice Contributor

Last February, one month before the full impact of COVID-19 would hit the United States, Family First Health (FFH) opened a new facility in Lebanon. At that new facility FFH has integrated coronavirus testing.

By late July or possibly sooner, the York-based agency will include coronavirus testing at their other locations, which include two in York, and Columbia, Lewisberry, Hanover, and now Lebanon.

"We will have testing capacity at all facilities for both symptomatic individuals and those exposed to coronavirus, whether they are new or existing patients," CEO Jenny Englerth says.

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC.gov/tips

A 50-year-old federally qualified health center, FFH has "integrated healthcare services for anyone who needs it, but especially for vulnerable populations with barriers to accessing medical services," Englerth explains.

"At our core," she continues with conviction, "we believe that primary care covers head to toe healthcare and we focus on medical delivery, oral health, as well as mental and behavioral health. We design our healthcare services around barriers to care, including race, language, socio economic status, gender identity, and sexual orientation."

"For the first 90 days," Englerth explains, "our approach to COVID-19 has been an emergency response. As we move forward, we will be integrating it into our full healthcare response." Eventually, they hope to offer testing to all patients once the criteria restrictions are lifted and more tests are available.

Recognizing that overcoming a pandemic is a marathon rather than a sprint, FFH has taken advantage of the lifted restrictions to doing telehealth by using telephone and video conferencing as connection options for patients.

"We have wanted to do this for a long time to allow people more options to receive care without sacrificing face-to-face interactions." Englerth believes that going forward, telemedicine will help them reach patients restricted to their homes or beds, as well as those lacking transportation. "Taking down barriers to accessing healthcare and addressing those with specific needs has always been part of who we are and how we serve," she says.

> "Taking down barriers to accessing healthcare and addressing those with specific needs has always been part of who we are..."

"We orient our healthcare approach based upon the patient's goals," Englerth continues, "how they define being healthy. Our medical team then works to support that vision."

The agency's goal is to get to know the whole person over time, realizing that many people may not reveal their identities or circumstances right away. "We ensure a nonjudgmental nature about how we deliver care that helps people feel comfortable opening up." They do that often through subtle messaging, using signs and photos in the office that displays what different families may look like. "We try to be very intentional in our understanding and in how we ask questions so that patients can feel like we address their needs and their identities," Englerth says.

The agency also integrates into every visit depression and anxiety screenings for patients 12 and older in order to normalize and destigmatize that aspect of mental health.

"I cannot tell you," Englerth exclaims with hopeful excitement in her voice, "the number of stories that the questionnaires have helped people open up about regarding their identities. They really give people the opportunity to talk about their gender identity and sexual orientation. We often include personal perspective stories to staff," she continues, "so that they can better understand that biases exist and how to interact with patients so that they feel heard and whole."

Seven years ago, FFH began offering more than the binary male/female options for gender identification.

"It was a learning process for both our staff and our patients," Englerth admits. "Giving education to both has allowed for better understanding of the transgender and non-binary community." In addition to working with Penn State Hershey, designated FFH providers are undergoing specific training on the transition process and how to provide hormone replacement therapy services. "In all aspects of healthcare, our training is ongoing and consistent."

FFH also offers an HIV program called Caring Together.

"We know that people living with HIV is a specific subset of the LGBTQIA+ community and often an intersecting population," Englerth explains. By "intersecting" she means some patients may reflect more than one "underserved" group. For example, a woman may be both lesbian and a person of color, both of which are underserved populations. For those patients, they tailor messaging and recommendations, especially during the

Please see **COVID-19 PROGRAM**, page **13**

STRENGTH & MORE STRENGTHS

Local leaders reflect on changes due to COVID-19

If COVID-19 didn't challenge you, tell us your secret. Several local church and civic leaders share their experiences and how the arrival of the virus may change their 'normal' as we all move forward.

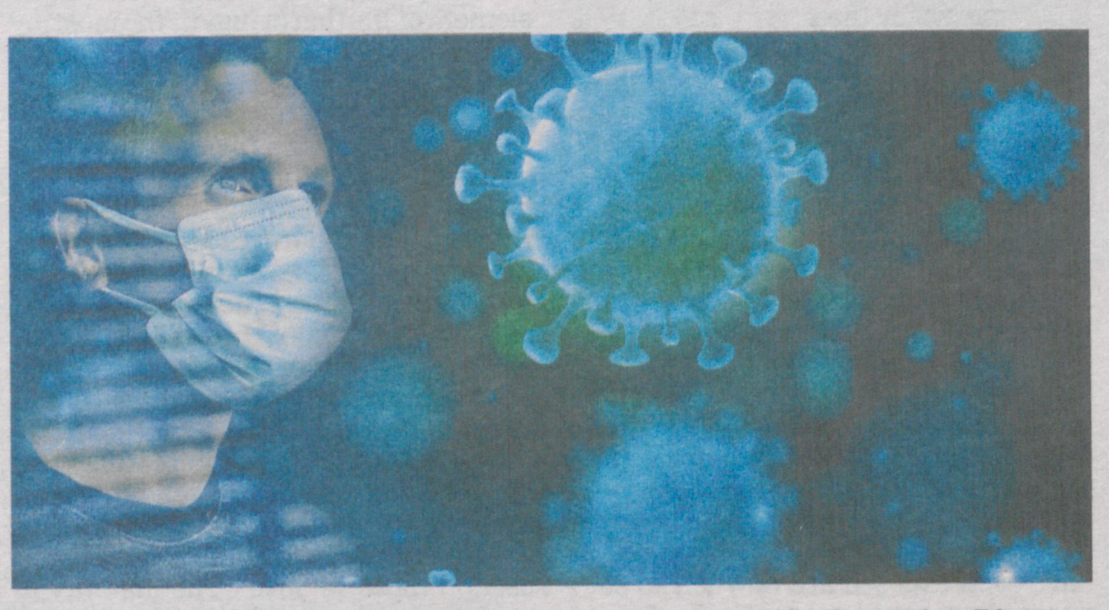
MCC of the Spirit pastor, Rev. Lori Hatch-Rivera, tells *The Central Voice*, "Live streaming is now our reality." Moving forward, she says that her congregation is "rethinking everything. How we do worship, serve communion, when to return to face to face gatherings and what will they look like." Essentially, "Everything has to be thought through and might look different."

One different look is the decision to combine the live streamed worship services of MCC and the Old Catholic Church Parish of St. Joseph into one service. "Both of our congregations are learning about each other's traditions and Bishop Michael Scalzi and I take turns preaching and consecrating communion. It has been a wonderful experience and a blessing," Hatch-Rivera says.

MCC of the Spirit celebrates their 40th anniversary in November. "We're not sure how that is going to look. Yet we will continue to move forward and continue learning new technologies that enable us to be engaged. We use Zoom for meetings and Bible Study and we live stream our services," Hatch-Rivera says.

"I am inspired by the resiliency of our community to lend a hand and support each other!"

-Adrian Shanker



TransCentralPA President Holly Evans reports having to "to curtail our monthly meetings. Zoom conference calls do not provide the same sense of support. We need to find creative ways to reach out to members while protecting ourselves, members and guests by conveying a safe environment for all attendees."

Joanne Carroll, Executive Director, Trans Advocacy Pennsylvania and Co-Chair, Keystone Conference, has also moved training and other activity from face-to-face to Zoom. "However, in terms of our adjunct counseling for hospitalized trans-persons, that work continues albeit from a distance," She clarifies, adding "learning to be proactive as opposed to reactive will be our challenge."

Carroll laments the "outpouring of racial, homophobic, transphobic and xenophobic sentiment" that she thinks has "set the clock back" on people coming together.

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center has always been focused on health equity for the LGBT population notes Founder and Executive Director Adrian Shanker.

"But one thing that COVID-19 has made clear for our mission is the urgency of advocating for health equity - that simply stated, we cannot wait, our community cannot wait. The increased vulnerabilities for our community to this dangerous virus makes it clear that we need more resources devoted to LGBT health in our communities," Shanker says.

Like so many other organizations, Shanker has transformed most of the center's supportive services, fine art galleries, library programs, youth programs, and Pride Festival to virtual formats. "We are laser focused on keeping our community safe and connected during these dark times," he says.

Any silver linings?

Shanker notes "We've had local heroes make masks we provided to youth program participants." He's had donors who contributed their stimulus check to support the center. Grant funders have made emergency grants available. "I am inspired by the resiliency of our community to lend a hand and support each other!" Shanker says.

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Go forward and rise from this pandemic

Trans Central PA Topics

By Holly Evans

As I reflect over these past few months at the impact that COVID -19 has had on so many, the struggles that we all have had to endure as a community, as a nation, I think to myself what is that one precious element of our lives that has been impacted the most over these past few months, that one aspect of our lives that we all had taken for granted until it was gone and now seek to find a way to once again regain.

Many have been disappointed over the cancelation or postponement of a highly anticipated event such as a vacation, a concert, a sporting event or even attending a wedding. Others by the cancelation of a conference, graduation ceremony, or gathering we had been looking forward to. The loss of these activities or events, individually and on their own, is a minor inconvenience to our daily lives.

Has it been the impact of losing a job or having one's income drastically reduced, due to an employer forced to close their doors or drastically reduce their staff, as this can rob one of their sense of security or independence? These impacts have forced many to seek assistance from food banks, churches, and the government at a time when these very safety nets are stretched thin. We have all had to subsequently re-prioritize our spending to simply get by. This impact has truly been felt by many during this pandemic and has forced individuals and families to choose food or meds over clothing or rent. This pain has been displayed publicly over news casts while being felt in silence by many in their homes as they have tried to make ends meet.

Has it been the inability to visit a family member or loved one in a hospital or nursing home as they have closed their doors to families and visitors for fear of spreading the virus leaving loved ones to suffer alone; while others who may be deemed "essential" and / or who may have been exposed are now left to self-quarantine, avoid contact with family and friends. Or is it the loss of a loved one who passed during this time either because of COVID-19 or of some other illness and our inability to properly grieve the loss as we are denied the ability to gather and pay our last respect. We have been asked to shelter in place, withdraw from social interaction, avoid physical contact, stay six feet apart and robbed of our ability to be there for loved ones in their time of need.

These are all significant and meaningful examples of what is so precious to the very fabric of society, and our lives, and all share a common element. Each in its own way give us reason to think about what is truly important. So, what has living through the COVID – 19 Pandemic made so evidently clear as truly the most important aspect of life. The single element of life that brings us the most joy as people, the one that gives us a reason to wake up and go about our day. The one element that has common threads in our struggles and in our victories, in every celebration and sorrow. This loss has been felt by us all and in many ways. By some much harder than others. Its impact has been there all the time but has been made so much more evident these past few months. What is that one intangible item that we have simply taken for granted and have hence had stripped away.

We as humans are social creatures. We are instantly drawn to each other and need the love, support and energy that emanates from being with those around us, and those we love. The inability to be there for one another in times of joy or sorrow, to come together to celebrate accomplishments, to share ideas and experiences, to offer one another love and support in times of need, to me, has been that one thing that we have taken for granted and for which has been taken from us. It's the very energy that we draw from others when we attend Celebrations of Joy and accomplishment and the very strength and support, we convey to others when we are with them to help them through difficult times and times of sorrow. It is that act of social support and being there for one another that makes us who we are through acts of love, compassion, celebration, and support for one another

That intangible feeling, we both give and receive by our ability to come together to be there for one another, to me, is the one element of our lives so often simply expected, so often overlooked, and so often taken for granted, until now. As we are asked to keep six feet apart, avoid physical contact, avoid large gatherings, and Stay home we are stripped of that one essential, intangible element that makes us human, that gives us strength. The inability to gather and be with one another in close contact with each other in the ways we have so often come to expect, challenges us in a way we are not accustomed.

Our need for social interaction, as well as the Love and emotional support of others is so very important in every part of our lives. Whether it is experienced in simple everyday activities, such as giving a hug to someone who has had a bad day, or holding one's hand when they are sick and in need of that love and support, or in deeper ways by coming together in difficult times working side by side taking on a challenge.

As we go forward and rise from this pandemic, reach out to friends and family, reach out to your neighbors, and reach out to fellow members of the LGBTQ community as many of them have had to deal with this loss along with the struggles inherent of our acceptance by society as a whole.

Remember there is always tomorrow! And yes, we will get through this!!

COVID-19 PROGRAM from page 10

current pandemic that impacts immune-compromised people like someone with HIV.

In identifying the HIV-positive community's specific needs, Englerth says, "We have offered home delivered groceries, helped people navigate isolation, mailed out over 300 masks to people's homes, and held video conferences with patients since the second week of the pandemic to provide additional education relating to that population."

On May 13 Gov. Tom Wolf mandated the collection of gender identity and sexual orientation information with COVID-19 testing.

"We were actually looking at that from the beginning," Englerth says. "It was a natural extension to the data we already collected, so it was very easy to comply with." Knowing it will take time to realize the full impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQIA+ population, Englerth appreciates the specific data collection and believes it will "raise awareness, which is a good thing."

FFH has over 25,000 patients overall with slightly less than 1,000 tested for coronavirus based on current criteria restrictions. "Only a handful, just five, tested positive from within the LGBTQIA+ community that we serve," Englerth says. "We continue to monitor those patients and to assist with their recovery," she says.

"While we have seen no disparities to date, we will need more numbers to make those determinations." Already, the data has shown that the Latinx community is faring poorly, and so FFH is tailoring bilingual messaging to address that population.

When it comes to healthcare within the LGBTQIA+ population overall, Englerth sees disparity in another way.

"In this situation, I'd say is that the LGBTQIA+ population is less engaged in healthcare, often due to stigma or financial constraints." She continues, "However, this is not the time to stay away from healthcare."

There are hospitals for urgent needs, Englerth notes, but there is a definite need to contact a primary healthcare physician. "I understand that many in the community have a mixed bag of experiences regarding healthcare," she acknowledges, "but now is the time to firm up that relationship so they can get routine care as well as address issues such as COVID-19, general health concerns, and chronic healthcare needs."

PHOTO FROM FFH WEB SITE

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AWARDS

from page 1

integrity, and initiative in serving readers and audiences, and faithfully fulfills its First Amendment rights and responsibilities.

"Our business mission is to provide a 'voice' for the LGBT community, our allies, and advertisers," Frank Pizzoli, founding publisher and editor, said. "When peers note our editorial work in diversity, news beat reporting, lifestyle and entertainment news, educational column and our cartooning, it's feedback we're on the right track."

"There's always room for more voices. I encourage anyone who has an interest in getting involved to directly contact me –frankpizzoli@gmail.com," Pizzoli said.

"We are very fortunate to have the talents of Frank Pizzoli as well as the many other contributors," said Joe Sukle, co-owner of Press & Journal Publications, parent company of The Central Voice. "We are also appreciative of the continued support of the business community and the many organizations that depend on Central Voice for the 'straight' news about the LGBTQ+ community."

For the second year in a row, CV parent company Press & Journal won the PNA-KMA Sweepstakes Award for Division VI.

Voice Awards

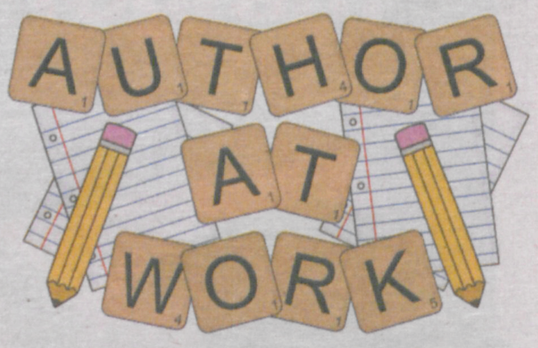
Diversity, First Place, Louie Marven, Tesla Taliaferro, Frank Pizzoli, "Diversity with diversity"

News Beat Reporting, Second Place, Frank Pizzoli, Tesla Taliaferro for York County and York City Beat

Column, Second Place, Frank Pizzoli, Trum Simmons regular education column "All in the Academy"

Lifestyle/Entertainment Beat, Second Place, Frank Pizzoli

Graphic/Photo Illustration, second Place, Frank Pizzoli, Brad Gebhart, Cartoon - "Hammer of Justice"



Voice editor teaching Writing for the Arts

Bouncing back in safe and careful fashion, the Art Association of Harrisburg hopes to resume their Covid-cancelled classes on July 13 for Summer.

New this summer will be a FLUID ART WORKSHOP on July 18 & 20 with Miranda Metz, and an innovative WRITING FOR THE ARTS class taught by *The Central Voice* editor Frank Pizzoli July 15-Aug. 19.

Register – www.artassocofhbg.com

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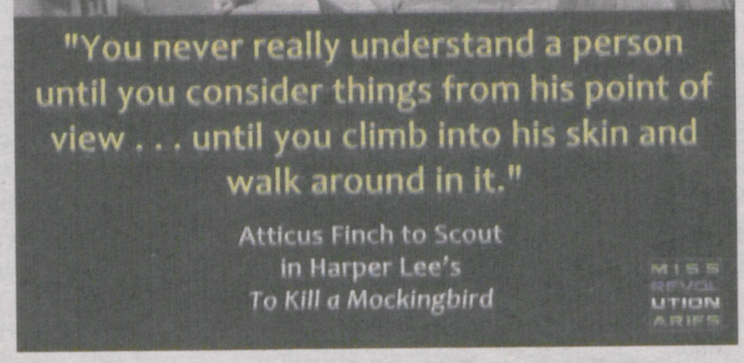
Are we still killing mockingbirds?

"Sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whisky bottle in the hand of (another)... There are just some kind of men who - who're so busy worrying about the next world they've never learned to live in this one, and you can look down the street and see the results."

- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*


"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."
Atticus Finch to Scout
in Harper Lee's
To Kill a Mockingbird
MISS REVOLUTION ARIES

Mary Badham (top right), who portrayed Jean Louise "Scout" Finch in the 1962 movie version of *Mockingbird* for which she was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, spoke at the 2018 Milford Readers and Writers Book Festival.

CENTRAL VOICE PHOTO

Art Association of HARRISBURG

Upcoming Events

THE ART ASSOCIATION OF HARRISBURG PRESENTS
2020 VISION GALA
SATURDAY, JULY 25th - 6 to 10PM
COUNTRY CLUB OF HARRISBURG
Capital BLUE

July 25th, 6:00-10:00 pm:

2020 Vision Gala

- Country Club of Harrisburg
- Tickets: $150 per person
- Visit www.artassocofhbg.com for reservations

Starting July 13th:

Summer Semester Art Classes For Youth & Adults

September 13th, 12:00-5:00 pm:

32nd Annual Gallery Walk

Please visit the website and the Art Association of Harrisburg Facebook page for updates and changes due to possible pandemic restrictions.

All dates subject to change due to social distancing prohibitions.

Visit www.artassocofhbg.com for more information & reservations

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BRADBURY-SULLIVAN
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Black gay men win Pulitzer Prizes

The Pulitzer Prizes in Arts and Letters have been awarded to poet Jericho Brown for his book *The Tradition* and playwright Michael R. Jackson, who won for his musical *A Strange Loop.* Jackson is the first black writer to win the prize for musical theatre.

Copper Canyon Press's description of *The Tradition:* "Beauty abounds in Jericho Brown's Pulitzer Prize-winning poetry collection, despite and inside of the evil that pollutes the everyday. A National Book Award finalist, *The Tradition* questions why and how we've become accustomed to terror: in the bedroom, the classroom, the workplace, and the movie theater. From mass shootings to rape to the murder of unarmed people by police, Brown interrupts complacency by locating each emergency in the garden of the body, where living things grow and wither—or survive. In the urgency born of real danger, Brown's work is at its most innovative. His invention of the duplex—a combination of the sonnet, the ghazal, and the blues—is an all-out exhibition of formal skill, and his lyrics move through elegy and memory with a breathless cadence. Jericho Brown is a poet of eros: here he wields this power as never before, touching the very heart of our cultural crisis."

Brown said: Poetry allows me to deal with being an artist of many backgrounds and to hold great complexity in my very being.... For me, it becomes a way to think and re-think about tradition. I have the opportunity to carve something new in a tradition—in several traditions—that is a very long and very old tradition. And that seems to be our job. How do we move forward within the tradition as individuals? And that's exactly what I'm after. I'm not after a rejection of being a Black gay poet. I'm after understanding what being a Black gay poet might allow me. I'm not the only, or the first, Black gay poet, so what does being a Southern-gay-Black-poet allow me? What can that bring forth in my work? That's what I'm really interested in seeing. I'm interested in looking at the larger—supposedly larger tradition and all of the traditions within that supposedly larger tradition. I'm going to change that because I hate the word so much because obviously I am one hundred percent an American poet. I am a part of the larger tradition. I am an English-speaking poet."

Jericho Brown, poet and Michael R. Jackson, playwright | TWITTER

Theatrical magazine *Playbill* said about Jackson's musical play: *A Strange Loop* made its world premiere last year at Off-Broadway's *Playwrights Horizons* in a co-production with Page 73. The musical, inspired by Jackson's own experiences, follows a young artist at war with a host of demons—not least of which are the punishing thoughts in his own head—in an attempt to capture and understand his own strange loop. Directed by Stephen Brackett with choreography by Raja Feather Kelly, the musical was named the Best Musical of the 2019–2020 season by the New York Drama Critics Circle and was nominated for the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical (winning two Lucille Lortel Awards for actors Larry Owens and John-Andrew Morrison). The production also recently earned six Drama Desk Award nominations."

Young Avengers has just enough action to balance characters

Comic Watch

By Nicolas Duncan

Review: Young Avengers #3

Young Avengers #3 is a power pack of character development. Allan Heinberg continues to show off his storytelling skills as he concentrates on the background of the members of this teenage super-group. Note, I stated group and not a team; well they're not there quite yet. Let's hope that this group of Young Avengers can learn a few things first. One powerful lesson came from Iron Man, aka Tony Stark; "We were so busy taking care of the world, we forgot to take care of each other". Before these super-teens can take care of each other in battle, they may need to prioritize focus and learn more about each other personally. Heinberg, outstandingly, provides enough background to each character, while building suspense to intrigue the imagination.

Nathaniel Richards, aka Iron Lad, is the person responsible for seeking and forming this group. We have learned quite a few details about this Young Avenger in these past three issues. Richards was born in the 30th century where the world seems perfect, however, it's not entirely true. One day when he was being bullied, his older-self, who is referred to as "Kang the Conqueror. This was an important moment in time as the bully was about to injure young Richard's throat to the brink of death. Kang stopped that from happening and continued to provide his younger self a taste of the future by providing him with a Neuro-Kenetic armor. Kang hoped that his past self would take the mantel sooner, rather than later. Kang's ultimate plan may have had a chance if he chose to come back to the past right after young Richards recovered from his injury. This is a small miscalculation that caused this chain reaction. Young Richards did not experience the trauma and develop the feelings of rage, resent, and hate, which is why he decided to renounce his destiny and traveled back further in time to seek the assistance of the Avengers; Kang's enemy's.

Once Richard's arrived to the present Earth-616 timeline, the Avengers were disbanded and created another obstacle to overcome. After striking out on tracking down members of the Avengers, Richards chose to "borrow" the remains of Vision and downloaded the memories into his suit. There is a "fail-safe" program that was built to find the next generation of Avengers in case the original were no longer active. It seems that Richards has the similar powers available to Kang the Conqueror of Earth-6311 and those of Iron Man. Now, by taking the name as Iron Lad, he used this program and found his recruits and finding himself telling his story to some important people.

Have you noticed that Asgardian and Hulkling are always together? Things to make you go hmmm! Heinberg is taking his time with these two and I greatly appreciate his thought process. Shit, it leaves the reader intrigued and wanting for more. Currently, even they don't know or understand their powers or background. We can honestly compare Asgardian to Thor and Hulkling, well... kind of like our not-so jolly green gamma infused giant. They are both eager to be heroes and fight for good and all that, but they are a little naive. In *Young Avengers #3*, we learn that Asgardian's real name is Billy Kaplan and Hulkling's real name is Teddy Altman.

In spite of not easily to divulge his identity, we have a better understanding and background of the group's leader in training, Patriot. Up to this point, all we knew about this character is that he has a huge chip on his shoulders. That's about it; well, until Young Avengers #3. Why does Patriot wear an uniform similar to Captain America's once upon a time sidekick, Bucky?

As Eli Bradley proudly explains the connection to a family legacy of heroes, he continues deeply on how, he, himself, was exposed to the super soldier serum. Personally, I think that Eli is the icing on the cake. This character tackles multiple topics relating to today's world and it explains his attitude with a dash of resentment. By the end of this *Young Avengers #3,* I believe there is a mutual understanding and respect between Captain America and Patriot. However, I think that Kate is absolutely 100% correct when she stated, "Why can't you be more like him?"

Thinking of Kate Bishop; we know that she was born with a silver spoon, but with a caring heart. She has awesome fighting skills, which we saw in the first issue as she saved the Young Avengers. Patriot seems to be jealous or maybe his pride was hurt that a girl without powers defeated some bad guys where he found difficulty to accomplish. In the aftermath of that event, Kate befriended Cassie Lang. Yes, the daughter of Ant-Man. Born without powers, Cassie, just wanted to gather her recently deceased father's suit and become a Young Avenger. But, wait! Apparently, Cassie does have superpowers!

Heinberg provided a heartfelt story between Cassie and Iron Man in *Young Avengers #3.* The reader is very easily touched by Tony Stark's confession about Cassie's father's murder and expression of concern with her becoming a superhero. There are consequences to our actions!

Action, yes, *Young Avengers #3* has just enough to balance out with the character building. Jim Cheung & John Dell artwork, along with colors by Justin Ponsor are sharply detailed with fitting warm purples, soft blues, grays and a touch of greens that makes each panel pop. This team outstandingly enhances Heinberg's storytelling between the action, character building and the dose of humor.

Best quote in Young Avengers #3; "We're fanboys, aren't we? So, we collect them all." – Hulkling

Young Avengers are quite an eclectic mix of people and it somehow works.

Nicolas Duncan - For me, comics have demonstrated a form of communication that marries the linear sequence of typography with the global perception of an internet-like matrix of simultaneous parts. I really enjoy to expressing "why" comic books are important for all people. Earth is a diverse place and so are comic books.

PRIDE UPDATES from page 1

statement said, in part: "This agonizing decision was made after many hours of spirited discussion and in close consultation with the Pennsylvania Capitol Facilities Management Office, the Office of the Governor, Tom Wolf and our superhero, Dr. Rachel Levine, Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

"Safety has always been one of our organizations bedrock principles; given the current magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulty practicing social distancing at large scale events such as ours poses, we overwhelmingly feel the only way to adequately protect our patrons, vendors, staff and entertainers from the virus is to sacrifice this year's festival," the statement continued.

The oft-repeated yarn about the festival is that somewhere along the line, the annual event would have to be cancelled because of weather. High waters due to excessive rain forcing up the water level along the banks of the Susquehanna River forced organizers to move the venue in 2018. That's when the event was moved to the state Capital grounds.

"We pulled off moving the festival from the riverfront to the Capitol grounds in 48 hours a couple years ago, but as the days have gone on and the closer we get to Pride, our team came to the heart wrenching conclusion, there's just no way to safely host this year's festival," Martin said.

"Pride is a joyful, socially close intense experience. Pride isn't pride without that.

As there's no end to social distancing anytime soon that we can see, we felt this year's festival was untenable," the statement concluded.

Pride Festival of Central PA info: centralpapridefestival.com

Lancaster

Now rescheduled for Oct. 24, Lancaster Pride Festival will run from noon to 8 p.m. at Clipper Stadium. The dog friendly venue is a rain or shine event. According to their web site, organizers "we do not stipulate a dress code beyond the legal requirements of the State of Pennsylvania."

The venue is ADA accessible, which includes parking, restrooms, and the spaces in and around the venue. Clipper Stadium is a 10-minute walk from the local Amtrak station and a 15-minute walk from the Queen Street bus station. In addition, there are a few bus routes run by the stadium and goers can check out Red Rose Transit more information.

Lancaster info: lancpride.com/events/event/lancpride-2020

York

York's Equality Fest (and it's Junior version) is rescheduled to Oct. 9-11. The venue was originally established as "a day long, family friendly community, arts and cultural celebration held in Downtown York City to celebrate the passage of marriage equality and to encourage according to the web site. This event is free and open to the public.

Tesla Taliaferro , President, Rainbow Rose Center, tells CV this year his group boasts three days of opportunities to mix, mingle and show your Pride.

Equality Fest Jr. is Oct 9, 5 p, m. to 8 p.m. at UUCY. Equality Fest Oct 10, 10am-2 (maybe 3 p.m.) at Cherry Lane. And Coming Out Day Celebration/Blessing Sunday is Oct 11 at Union Lutheran.

Carla Christopher, co-founder of the event, said upon its launch "Today is the York County I want to live in." Performer Jah Thomas-Friend said, "Any place that's diverse and where I can see everybody is welcome is always something I want to be a part of."

York info: rainbowrosecenter.org

Lehigh Valley

Presented by Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, Lehigh Valley Pride is August 16, from noon to 6 p.m. at the JCC of the Lehigh Valley, 702 N. 22nd St., Allentown. Admission is $5, children ages 12 and under free, youth 14-21 can earn a free ticket to pride through participation in Project SILK.

Lehigh Valley Pride info: bradburysullivancenter.org

Gettysburg

The Gettysburg Pride web site says the event is slated for May 29, but an asterisk notes date subject to change. This event runs from 4 p.m. until 11 p.m. with specific Gettysburg venues participating in a series of activities. According to their web site, attendees can visit a local art gallery and "see posters highlighting pioneers of LGBT+ rights from past to present" or get a photo with Santa. Gettysburg Theatre may be involved with a presentation of The Laramie Project and finally a community meet and greet.

Gettysburg info: gettysburgpride.org

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Milford's TriVersity welcomes visitors

Eleven years old and the first LGBTQ center in Northeastern Pennsylvania, TriVersity reflects the rural nature of the tri-state area (PA, NJ, NY) along the Delaware River. Its proximity to New York City has attracted a large number of visitors and NYC 'transplants' who have brought diversity, particularly in regards to the GLBT community, to an otherwise fairly homogeneous area.

In fact, Pike County currently has the highest proportion of same sex coupled households in the State of Pennsylvania (December, 2007, Census Snapshot by The Williams Institute).

TriVersity has had tremendous success with our social programs says Steven C. Teague, President and Executive Director. "Events that provide a safe space for LGBTQ community members and allies to meet, network, and fellowship with one another.

In 2009, the center began hosting a monthly mixer known as First Friday, a tradition continues even during the COVID era. "We've shifted the mixers to a virtual format," Teague says. The center has also hosted The Prom for all ages, giving both youth and adults a prom where they can be their authentic selves."

In addition to social programs, TriVersity has had tremendous success with discussion and support group for youth and adults. "While we are currently rebuilding our Youth program, our (now) Virtual Transgender Support Group and Virtual HIV Support Group continue to thrive even in the face of COVID-19.

In reaction to COVID-19, the center has established two new virtual discussion groups. One group is Coffee Talk which allows participants a chance to check in with their TriVersity family and discuss just about anything. The other group is SOS - Sharing Our Spirit, a weekly spiritual check (not pegged to any specific religious tradition) in when participants address a specific topic each week.

Overall, switching to a Zoom platform for programming has allowed Teague to expand outreach further into the Poconos and North Central regions of the state. "We've even had people outside the Tristate area express interest in some of our support groups," he says.

Experience shows that Milford and Pike County's tourist destination status draws LGBTQ tourists to the center, as

Please see **MILFORD WELCOMES,** page **20**

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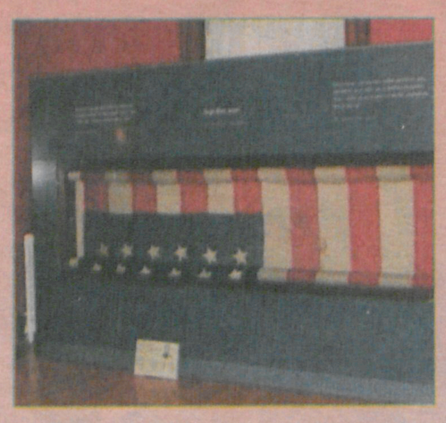
Grey Towers National Historic Site, ancestral home of Gifford Pinchot, America's "first forester"; house and gardens open for tours.

The north gate to the 70,000-acre Delaware Water Gap National Park with waterfalls, canoeing, tubing, and miles of hiking and biking trails.

Exquisite 19th c. architecture by Vaux, LaFarge, Hunt and Olmsted. 75% of Milford is a national historic district.

The working 19th century wooden grist mill at the Upper Mill/Old Lumberyard complex, with boutiques, restaurants and antiques.



Columns Museum with its most famous relic: the blood-stained flag that cushioned President Lincoln's head moments after he was assassinated.

A wide variety of restaurants throughout historic Milford.

Great lodging, including many B&Bs and hotels.

Speciality food and gift shops, fine home furnishings, art galleries and a year-round schedule of festivals and activities.

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Pike County Historical Society at The Columns

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Summer reading & new book club

The library is slowly reopening to the public. This summer the library is starting a new book club called Reading the Rainbow. The book club features LGBTQ+ works, authors, and protagonists. Starting in June, the book club will meet virtually via Zoom through July 11, and August 8 from 1:00-2:00 pm. Registration is required. For more information as well as the titles being read, visit *dcls.org/adultevents.*

Dauphin County Library Book Reviews

By Yvonne Carmichael

Dreadnought (Nemesis Series, bk 1), by April Daniels

"A transgender teenager is transformed into her ideal self after being imbued with the powers of the world's greatest superhero in this thought-provoking first book in the Nemesis series. As the latest iteration of Dreadnought, 15-year-old Danielle is expected to train with the local team, the Legion Pacifica, until she's ready to become a full-fledged hero. Unfortunately, her parents would rather "cure" her and turn her back into Danny, and her reception among the other heroes is mixed at best. Danielle teams up with vigilante heroine Calamity to track down the previous Dreadnought's murderer, only to stumble upon a plan to destroy the human race. In an impressive debut, Daniels skillfully conveys Danielle's pain, confusion, and emotional complexity as she faces a host of detractors and conflicts. While Danielle's supernatural transformation comes off as an easy solution compared to journeys of real-world trans teenagers, the novel's comic-book trappings allow for a fascinating exploration of gender identity in a fantastical setting. Danielle's evolution from confused teen to confident hero is entertaining and inspiring." (From Publishers Weekly)

Shine of the Ever, by Clair Rudy Foster

"By turns tender and punk-tough, Shine of the Ever is a literary mixtape of queer voices out of 1990s Portland. This collection of short stories explores what binds a community of queer and trans people as they negotiate love, screwing up and learning to forgive themselves for being young and sometimes foolish. "(From the publisher)

Everything is Beautiful, and I'm not Afraid: A Baopu Collection, by Yao Xiao.

"Writer and illustrator Xiao blends poetry, short comics, and questions of self-searching in this deeply personal exploration of what it means to be a queer immigrant in the U.S. Xiao dives deep into the waters of self-doubt, longing, and loneliness, while remaining gentle with herself and never failing to see her own progress and connections. Relationships are central, particularly family, both biological and the one she has created for herself in New York City. The whimsical illustrations are rich with color and simply drawn, tempering the deep emotional thread running through the book. A mix of sequential panels and full-page illustrations brings variety to the page, and while there isn't a traditional narrative arc in this collection, the tone and underlying themes create a cohesive work. Xiao is honest about the challenges of navigating Chinese and American culture and multiple intersections - an experience common for many young adults. Those struggling to find their place in the world may find some comfort in this collection." (From Book List)

The Third Rainbow Girl: The Long Life of a Double Murder in Appalachia, by Emma Copley Eisenberg

"In June 1980, 26-year-old Vicki Durian and 19-year-old Nancy Santomero were murdered while hitchhiking to the Rainbow Gathering festival in rural West Virginia. The investigation focused on locals, but it took more than a decade to get the case to trial due to a lack of evidence. After a guilty verdict was achieved and a local man was put behind bars, notorious serial killer Joseph Paul Franklin took credit for the murders, casting doubt on the entire investigation. Suspicion was once again cast over the local community, causing locals to turn away from outsiders, and impacting future generations. In a stunning work of true crime reporting, Copley Eisenberg delivers the gripping tale of the murders, trial, and subsequent reverberations through the community. The author transcends genre and offers a unique work that is part memoir, part sociological analysis, providing a compassionate commentary that has come from years of living in the community." (From Library Journal)

Life Oak, with Moss, by Walt Whitman

"As he was turning forty, Walt Whitman wrote twelve poems in a small handmade book he entitled "Live Oak, With Moss." The poems were intensely private reflections on his attraction to and affection for other men. They were also Whitman's most adventurous explorations of the theme of same-sex love, composed decades before the word "homosexual" came into use. Whitman never published the cycle. Instead he cut them up, rearranged them, and hid them in the "Calamus" cluster of poems in the 1860 edition of Leaves of Grass. Selznick has been greatly influenced by Whitman and has created more than 100 pages of original images that form a visual narrative around his work which provide a stirring interpretation. This transporting tour de force presents Whitman like never before and will be beloved by Selznick's myriad fans as well as poetry lovers everywhere. An afterword by Professor Karen Karbiener illuminates the story of Whitman's enigmatic cluster of poems, provides keys for interpreting their meanings, and highlights their contemporary significance"." (From the Publisher)

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Be careful of what you ask for

Ohio Rep. Candice Keller (R), best known for her outrageous claim that "transgender, homosexual marriage, and drag queen advocates" are at fault for mass shootings, was thumped in her recent primary race for a state senate seat.

Keller has compared Planned Parenthood to Nazis, and introduced one of the most draconian abortion bills in American history.

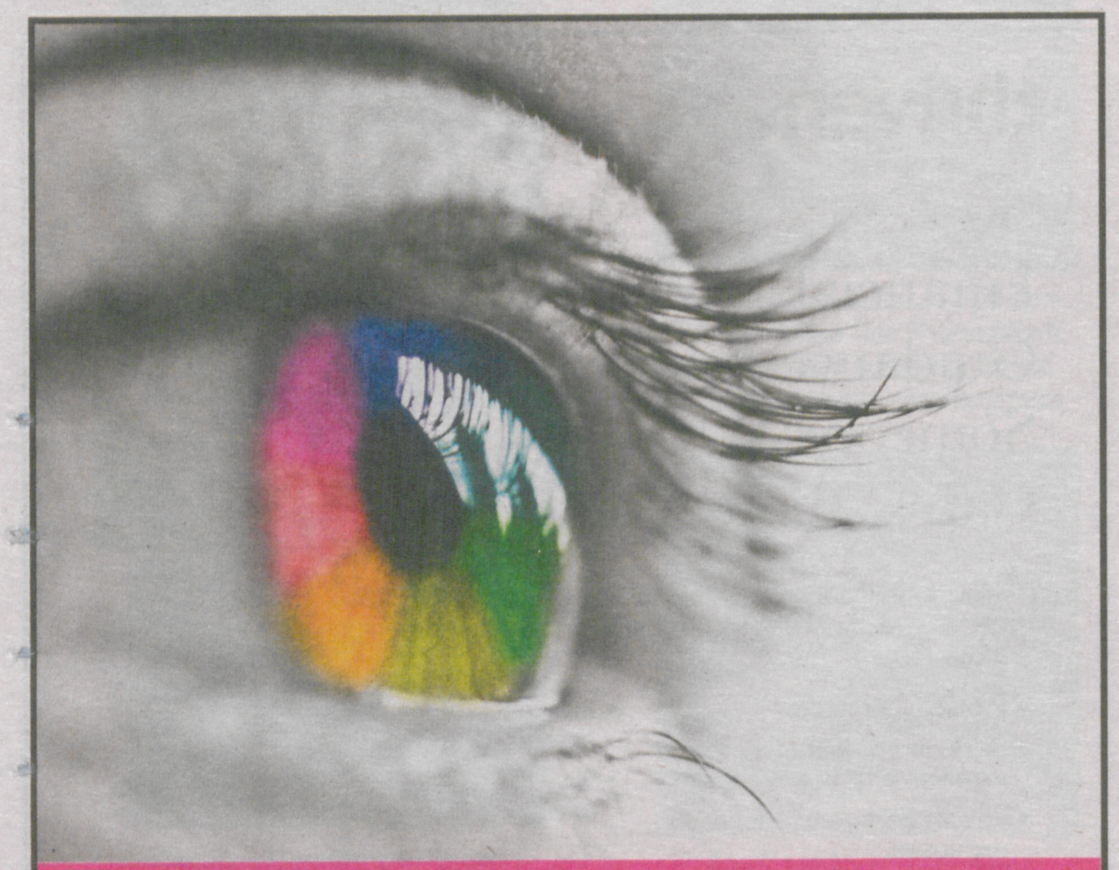
She lost to Rep. George Lang (R). Lang who was endorsed by the state party while party officials had already called on Keller to resign from the legislature.

One of Ohio's most controversial Republican politicians, Keller has done interviews with white supremacists, compared Planned Parenthood to Nazis, and introduced one of the most draconian abortion bills in American history.

Following a mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio that killed nine people, Keller took to social media to blame transgender people, former President Barack Obama, and "drag queen advocates" for the slaughter. "After every mass shooting, the liberals start the blame game. Why not place the blame where it belongs?" Keller wrote in the post that was made private after public outcry.

Ohio Republican Party Chair Jane Timken publicly called on Keller to resign, but she refused. She said it was up to voters to decide if she deserved to be in office. They did. She lost.

Ohio Representative Candice Keller (R) blamed "drag queen advocates" among others for the mass shooting in Dayton. She refused calls for her resignation, saying it's up to the voters to decide. She lost her primary bid for a senate seat.



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MILFORD WELCOMES from page 18

well as "weekenders" from New York City and the tri-state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. "Weekenders are less tourists and more part-time residents. We've had numerous visitors attend the First Friday mixers," Teague says.

New normal

Teague envisions the center's new normal will continue to sustain a very heavy virtual component. As Teague points out "Because the LGBTQ community experiences higher rates of immune disorders and cancer than the general population, members of the TriVersity community will be more reticent about reentering our physical center or attending in-person events until there is a vaccine available."

Teague says when "the time is right the center will reopen to the public, allowing those who want to attend support groups in person to do so." For now, the center will make sure all programs and meetings can be attended virtually. In terms of holding sizable social events, "we'll wait until the dust settles a bit more," Teague explains.

If you're planning a Milford-Pike County visit, travelers can check the center web site at http://www.triversitycenter.org or call 570-618-9638.

"We would love to have you be part of our TriVersity family if only for a brief stay!" says Teague.

TriVersity Programming

• *S.O.S. Sharing Our Spirit,* Sundays, 1-2p.m., via Zoom or check web site for updates. Social distancing does not have to mean spiritual distancing. SOS - Sharing Our Spirit is an online gathering designed to link members of our TriVersity community, families and friends, in an enlightening, enlivening, and spiritually dynamic way during this unprecedented time of Covid -19. During our weekly hour together, we will share our stories, poetry, prayers, meditations, and concerns irrespective of any particular religious affiliation or non-affiliation. SOS will be a time for us to tune out the news and social media, and to tune in to our spirit. Zoom details can be found on SOS Facebook group or contact steventeague@triversitycenter.org.

• *Transgender Support Group,* Mondays, 7-8p.m., via Zoom. Trans Support Group Meetings take place using Zoom. Meeting details will be provided closer to the meeting.

• *Coffee Talk,* Tuesdays, 7-8p.m., via Zoom. Join us for Coffee Talk every week during the social distancing period on Zoom. Meeting details will be provided on our e-mail list serve. If you are not on our e-mail list, please send a request to steventeague@triversitycenter.org. There is no agenda for Coffee Talk. Let's just have a little hang out time where we check in on one another.

INFO - TriVersity - Center for Gender & Sexual Diversity, 201 W. Harford St, Milford, PA 18337, 570- 832-4955, info@triversitycenter.org

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Finding peace in chaos

Making Sense of Life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

Are you still feeling a bit off, angry, or scared with the chaos around us? Are you depressed, anxious, or have any number of other emotions surfacing due to the pandemic?

Not everyone seems paralyzed by COVID-19 and the fallout it's caused. Why do some people look like they feel better than ever? What's the difference?

What got me thinking about this today was reading about some foreign destinations I want to visit. I now have more time, but at the time of this writing I'm not supposed to leave my home for anything other than the essentials. Plus, most of the countries I want to visit have closed their borders.

I could feel myself getting angry that my freedom of choice had been taken from me. But had it? What was bothering me was that I've had the opportunity in the past to go to those places and chose not to for one reason or another. Now I was blaming my feelings on COVID-19, as well as the people, agencies, and governments I personally feel should have done more to avoid this pandemic... or be doing more now that it's here. But it wasn't really about those things at all.

> We still possess our right of choice – we just have a new set of options from which to choose.

When times get rough you and I can easily fall into blaming others instead of doing the best we can with a current situation. COVID-19 has provided what we consider evidence of someone or something to hate or blame. When the Soviet Union dissolved, Mikhail Gorbachev warned the west it would now have to find someone new to hate. It's said that in Sicily a man mourns the death of his enemy more than his best friend – he, too, has lost someone upon which to heap his negative emotions, someone to blame.

That's not the case here. Sure, there's plenty of blame to go around, much of it directed toward the politics of a world which has maddened us for years. We get to be right! "They" were wrong!

This still isn't the basis for our feelings of anger, uncertainty, or any other emotions. Here are some reasons people are viewing the pandemic in this way:

We've lost our freedom of choice.

We're being told what we can and cannot do.

There are new regulations or guidelines delineating where we can and cannot go.

None of those statement set well at all with our American independent ideals, which is sometimes sadly exhibited by taking actions without considering the impact on others around us or on our planet. Now here's a few truths that debunk all of those excuses (because they aren't reasons):

We still possess our right of choice – we just have a new set of options from which to choose.

Humans are an interdependent species – working together aids our health and well-being.

We can still live much of our lives and plan for our future by not wallowing in our past and present.

These are special circumstances in which we live. COVID-19 and the sickness, death, and uncertainty it has brought with it is more than most of us have ever had to deal with in our lifetimes. It means more than any time in the past we must focus on what we can change in our individual lives, and not on what restrictions are being imposed upon us.

You may believe the shuttering of businesses, shelter in place, or the wearing of masks are measures too severe for the situation. Or you may believe these precautions are necessary but still find them annoying at best. The way to approach this is the same way as any other situation in our lives, even though this is an event on steroids like we've never seen. We may not be able to have the changes we want to see appear immediately. This can be maddening or discouraging, but it doesn't have to be.

There are things in our lives over which we have total control: Our attitude; our consciousness; our determination; and, our ability to adapt to any situation, among other qualities you may have already thought of. Continue to take care of yourself, reach out to friends when you need support, be there for others, and know that while the situation we're in may be with us for longer than we expected, this too shall pass. Together, we'll get through it.

Consistent belief in and the practice of universal principles are imperative now more than ever. Is this easy? Hell, no. Like Cher once said, "If you could bottle a body like this everyone would have one!" You and I can practice and benefit by using the principles upon which we build our lives. The choice we have is whether or not we are going to do it.

Terry is licensed social worker in private practice in Carlisle, a speaker, and award-winning author – find his books on Amazon. Contact him at: terry@terrydrewkaranen.com

Queer travel plans remain hopeful despite Covid-19

Prepared by The Harris Poll®

Not surprising to observe, most American adults surveyed in May by The Harris Poll®, express reservations and go-slow attitudes towards reviving their leisure and business travel habits. Acknowledging serious public health concerns as well as new limits promoting safe travel and accommodations practices, even the most frequent travelers cite caution in making their next plans in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

In many ways, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) adults appear to mirror their non-LGBT counterparts, yet depart in key ways including their past frequency of travel. LGBT adults, for example, reported taking an average of 3.6 leisure trips in the past year (compared to 2.3 leisure trips for non-LGBT adults) as well as 2.1 business trips, on average, compared to 1.2 trips by non-LGBT adults. Other key differences also surfaced in this study:

LGBT adults were twice as likely to plan travel over Memorial Day weekend vs. non-LGBT adults (8% vs. 4%).

Asked when they anticipate their next leisure trip, 28% of LGBT adults responded it would take place in the next four months (May-August) when contrasted with 21% of non-LGBT adults. Just over half (51%) of LGBT adults vs. 46% of non-LGBT adults expect to travel for vacation in 2020.

46% of LGBT adults (when compared with 37% of non-LGBT counterparts) expect the pandemic situation will be resolved before this year's summer travel season.

These are some of the results of an online survey conducted by The Harris Poll® among 2,508 nationally representative U.S. adults ages 18+ between May 6 and 8, 2020. 284 adult respondents self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT) including an oversample. Complete results of this study can be found at *theharrispoll.com/travel*.

"Americans so often feel travel is their lifeblood," said Erica Parker, Managing Director of The Harris Poll®. "Our newest benchmark reveals how conflicted, uncertain or confused many of us feel balancing our need to travel with health risks and cautions. It's especially enlightening to contrast similarities and differences among us, including LGBT travelers."

Whether traveling or not in the near-term, LGBT respondents reported feeling more comfortable than others making these specific travel choices today:

- Traveling to a US destination: 64% LGBT vs. 58% non-LGBT adults.
- Staying in a hotel: 59% LGBT vs. 50% non-LGBT adults.
- Staying at an Airbnb: 43% LGBT vs. 35% non-LGBT adults.
- Flying commercial aircraft: 43% LGBT vs. 35% non-LGBT adults.
- Traveling to Europe: 35% LGBT vs. 28% non-LGBT adults.
- Attending a crowded event, concert, theme park or beach: 33% LGBT vs. 25% non-LGBT.
- Taking a cruise: 31% LGBT vs. 23% non-LGBT.

Finally, when asked what conditions or arguments will have the greatest impact on their personal decisions favoring leisure travel in 2020, LGBT travelers disproportionately favored several:

- Significantly reduced public health risks: 60% LGBT vs. 54% non-LGBT.
- Strong need for travel/change of scenery: 54% LGBT vs. 43% non-LGBT.
- Compelling travel bargains and promotions: 47% LGBT vs. 36% non-LGBT.
- Personal desire to support a destination and local economy: 48% LGBT vs. 33% non-LGBT.

"Past research tells us travel remains a high priority for LGBT consumers – even when overcoming setbacks," said Bob Witeck, President of Witeck Communications, an LGBT market expert. "We witnessed this in 2001 following 9/11, as well as post-recession in 2009, when LGBT adults showed strong personal appetite to travel once again. As conditions permit, and the economy reopens, we anticipate LGBT travelers again will be found towards the front of many lines at airports, hotels and desirable destinations."

"All of us working in LGBTQ+ tourism have witnessed the resilience and loyalty of our travel community, yet having data to back this up is essential to ensure that LGBTQ+ travelers are valued as the tourism industry at large begins its recovery," said John Tanzella, President/CEO of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association . "We are pleased to see that The Harris Poll® places LGBTQ+ travelers at the forefront and that these findings among the U.S. LGBT community align with our recent survey of LGBTQ+ travel sentiment around the world."

Members of Dignity/Central PA gather in 1985 at the organization's 10th anniversary celebration with invited speaker and entertainer Quentin Crisp; (from left) Jerry Brennan, founder, Richard Hause, Crisp, and William Clifford
| PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LGBT CENTER OF CENTRAL PA HISTORY PROJECT, ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, DICKINSON COLLEGE, CARLISLE, PA; PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN.

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As he wrote the book, Burton says, "I discovered that I had been living in a bubble for the past 30 years," having lived in large cities that had anti-discrimination laws in place, gay neighborhoods, and built-in social networks.

When he got involved with the History Project, reading oral histories and interviewing people, Burton says he "had never faced some of the difficulties they had. I had lived a protected life. As the doors of liberation opened for me during those years, I just walked through them, thank you very much."

Burton didn't have to fight for his rights, or face discrimination like many people profiled in the book did. "I realized that this book had to be written. Living in a non-urban area as a LGBT citizen is an entirely different experience. The blinders went off and I felt a light had to be shown on this very important difference."

Understanding links between past and present is basic for understanding the human condition.

"History roots people in time and it gives us context. History is a legacy record; it is the story of us," Burton says. The stories told show "how someone stood up for what they believed in and made something happen."

Although many books have been written about urban queer history, those written about non-urban areas have mainly been about race, class, gender, coming out stories. "None of those books have dealt with the formation of a community. That is why this book plays an important part in our history. It documents stories of people who stood up and made something happen.

Barry Loveland says, "the most surprising thing that I learned is that our community's development in this region was more interesting and complex that I had ever expected." Loveland 's involvement revealed "many parts of our local history that I knew nothing about."

Besides co-founding and LGBT Center of Central PA History Project, Loveland worked for 32 years for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, retiring in 2015. His role with this book included assisting the author in concept and content development, research, editing and selection of illustrations.

How could a gay person live in the region and not know about his peers' activist and advocacy efforts? We are only 3-5% of the entire population.

"We tend to live from our own perspective without much awareness about the experiences of others in our community," Loveland posits. "Yet we were all living during the same time thinking we had an understanding of what was happening around us."

Loveland had little knowledge of local queer history that happened before he arrived in Harrisburg in 1983. "This was a wonderful journey of discovery, finding amazing stories going back to the 1950's and 60's." Burton and Loveland have highlighted stories not only of regional or statewide importance, but national and international importance that happened right here in central Pennsylvania.

The Penn State Press book relies heavily on oral history interviews and people telling their own stories. "Through interviews reveal personal experiences that people do not usually share in casual conversations among friends," Loveland notes. The book offers various perspectives on shared experiences - HIV/AIDS crisis, coming out, or walking into a gay bar for the first time."

For queer people to hearing or reading stories about their history fills a void. Other minority or ethnic communities have family and community histories that are shared inter-generationally. "It would be extremely rare for a young LGBT person coming out to have grown up in a household that would know anything about LGBT history, let alone be able to hand down those stories to their child," Loveland says.

"We grow up with no sense of our own history. Knowing the sacrifices, discrimination, and successes and progress that older generations of LGBT people have experienced provides a collective understanding of our history," Loveland says. Knowing our history gives hope to new generations that future progress is achievable, "and may have been made easier, by building on the work of activists from our past."

On June 24, Frank Pizzoli moderated a virtual discussion of the book hosted by Midtown Scholar Bookstore, the LGBT Center of Central PA, and Penn State University Press.

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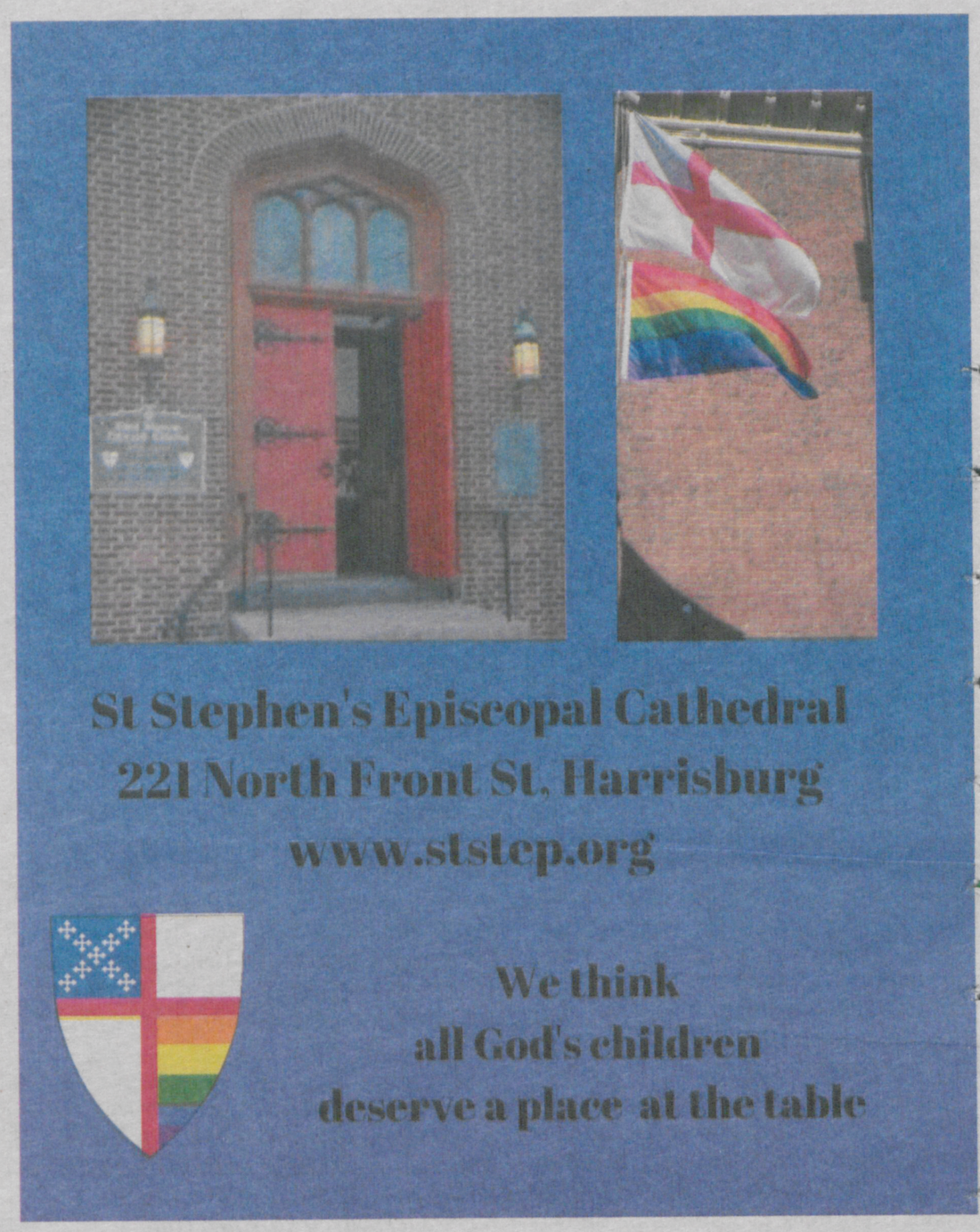
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